

Hammond



County of Los Angeles CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

January 12, 2006

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First District

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Second District

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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavy
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

2-1-1 LA COUNTY FEASIBILITY STUDY

On June 21, 2005, the Board of Supervisors approved a one-year Agreement with 2-1-1 LA County (formerly known as INFOLINE), effective July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, to provide 2-1-1 and specialized information and referral (I&R) services for the County of Los Angeles. Pursuant to Section 5.1.21 of the Agreement, the County is responsible for conducting a Feasibility Study with the assistance of 2-1-1 LA County to determine if additional call capacity should be added to the 2-1-1 I&R system.

Accordingly, the 2-1-1 Oversight Group, including the Departments of Health Services, Public Social Services, Community and Senior Services, Children and Family Services, Mental Health, Internal Services, and the Chief Information Office met with 2-1-1 to analyze call capacity. It was determined that the call capacity negotiated with 2-1-1 LA County for I&R and specialized services under the current Agreement is substantially being met based on reports issued for July through November 2005 by 2-1-1 LA County.

Since the current contract period expires on June 30, 2006, the Oversight Group addressed needs for the next contract period including the following potential additions:

- CAO, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) services
- Health Services call center

The Feasibility Study is attached. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Dorothea Park of this Office at (213) 974-4283.

DEJ:MKZ
DSP:MJS:ib

Attachment (1)

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Information Officer
Director of Children and Family Services
Director and Chief Medical Officer of Health Services
Director of Internal Services
Director of Mental Health
Director of Public Social Services
Interim Director of Community and Senior Services
2-1-1 LA County

2-1-1 LA COUNTY FEASIBILITY STUDY

Under the 2-1-1 LA County Agreement, adopted by the Board on June 21, 2005, Section 5.1.21 stipulated that the County was responsible for conducting a Feasibility Study within 180 days of the effective date of the Agreement, with the assistance of 2-1-1 LA County to determine if additional call capacity should be added to the 2-1-1 I&R system.

The 2-1-1 Oversight Group, including the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Public Social Services (DPSS), Community and Senior Services (DCSS), Children and Family Services (DCFS), Mental Health (DMH), Internal Services (ISD), and the Chief Information Office (CIO) met with 2-1-1 LA County and determined that the call capacity negotiated with them for I&R and specialized services under the current Agreement, is substantially being met based on reports issued for July through November 2005 by 2-1-1 LA County.

Since the current contract period expires on June 30, 2006, the Oversight Group addressed needs for the next contract period including the following potential additions:

- CAO, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) services
- Health Services call center

Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

The Office of Emergency Management currently contracts with 2-1-1 LA County using a toll-free, menu-driven public information hotline to provide the public with essential information on how residents can prepare in advance of disasters and refer callers to agencies for assistance in the event of a disaster.

During the recent Katrina disaster in the Gulf Coast, an estimated 7,000 evacuees arrived in Los Angeles County. Through public service announcements, notification to nonprofit organizations, and emergency management organizations in the County, the 2-1-1 I&R line was publicized for evacuees to obtain information on emergency relief services. 2-1-1 LA County collected information on individuals who needed assistance and service providers or individuals who could offer assistance. 2-1-1 LA County served as a conduit between the nonprofit organizations and those in need of, or who could offer, assistance to Katrina victims.

The current contract between OEM and 2-1-1 LA County will expire on June 30, 2006. OEM has proposed to discontinue its toll-free number for emergency preparedness and disaster relief information and to instead utilize the 2-1-1 LA County call center. Therefore, OEM will become part of the I&R service Agreement between the County and 2-1-1 LA County when that Agreement is renewed in 2006-07.

Department of Health Services

In addition to DCFS, DCSS, and DPSS, the launch of 2-1-1 in July 2005, included DHS and DMH. Although DHS operates its own call center which provides residents with I&R services regarding its programs and facilities with an annual call volume of 80,000 calls, DHS experiences seasonal spikes in call volume related to public service announcements by the Director of Public Health. Therefore, DHS decided to utilize the 2-1-1 call center as part of a planned public outreach to provide I&R for specific public health issues. In late September 2005, DHS issued a public service announcement regarding information on the flu season. Due to the success of this effort, DHS is evaluating the feasibility of transferring additional I&R calls for general health and human services to 2-1-1 LA County. It is anticipated that DHS will make a final determination in the beginning of 2006 in preparation for the next contract period with 2-1-1 LA County.

Other 2-1-1 Partnership Departments

The Department of Children and Family Services, DMH, DPSS, and DCSS are participants in the 2-1-1 County Agreement with 2-1-1 LA County. DCFS currently transfers non-child abuse calls directly to the 2-1-1 system, including I&R for individuals interested in becoming foster care parents. 2-1-1 operators also have been trained in the areas of mandated reporting in order to appropriately refer calls to DCFS facilities and programs. Calls that DMH receives that are beyond the scope of their main mission are transferred to the 2-1-1 call center. Due to the specialized nature of the services offered by both of these departments through their respective toll-free numbers and the need to access or provide confidential information, the departmental dedicated numbers will remain in use.

The Department of Public Social Services continues to be the principal funding source for 2-1-1, consistent with the call volume associated with DPSS programs and facilities. The Elder Abuse Hotline provided through DCSS has a dedicated toll-free number through 2-1-1 LA County that is under the current Agreement. Elder Abuse calls are answered in a priority manner by 2-1-1.

The CAO Unincorporated Help Line and Code Enforcement Toll-Free Hotline are answered by 2-1-1 staff specializing in code enforcement and municipal service referrals. The CAO needs to determine the feasibility of utilizing interactive voice recognition (IVR) menu options or an internal call transfer to route 2-1-1 for unincorporated services to the appropriate 2-1-1 staff. If an appropriate system can be developed, an opportunity may exist to phase out the use of the dedicated phone numbers in favor of the 2-1-1 dialing code.

Finally, the County and First 5 LA are coordinating calls to maximize public access to I&R services, health care enrollment, and specialized professional services. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed between the County and First 5 LA regarding the utilization of 2-1-1 call capacity, marketing, utilization, and monitoring of issues related to general 2-1-1 I&R services.

Ongoing Efforts

Several marketing efforts will be launched in 2006 including:

- DCFS billboard campaign;
- DMH Latino ACCESS meeting series on teen depression;
- CAO direct mail campaign on code enforcement;
- CAO publication of community guides for the unincorporated community advertising 2-1-1;
- CAO emergency survival program mailings; and
- DHS advertising of a smoking cessation program.

Additionally, the Oversight Group will continue discussions with other County departments that currently provide information through toll-free telephone service to determine whether the potential exists for the utilization of 2-1-1 for the provision of I&R services for certain seasonal programs or as a replacement of existing specialized services. However, analysis of these opportunities will require consideration of the balance between adding menu options to the IVR system or adding protocols requiring internal transfers to specialists with the appropriate skill set versus the more customer-oriented approach of having a call answered as soon as possible without any further transfer.

It is recognized that certain dedicated telephone services cannot be provided through 2-1-1 due to the requisite access to case-specific or confidential data. Such services are generally beyond the scope of traditional 2-1-1 services. Other services provided through the County would not necessarily benefit from having 2-1-1 at the front end of the call, as the end service provided by the County involves dispatching of resources or other action that would only be delayed through the use of 2-1-1 as the point of first contact.